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Continuity Tracts

SERVING BETTER TO GODLINESS

THE CHURCH, CELIBACY & ECUMENICAL LAW

Loquere filiis Israel ut proficiscantur

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Serving Better to Godliness

article

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1. The Church and Celibacy. By Mrs. Huth Jackson. Reprinted by kind permission from the *XIXth Century and After*.
2. Clerical Celibacy and Ecumenical Law. By Cuddesdonensis.

Serving better to Godliness

The Church and Celibacy

I WAS in a fashionable church a few Sundays ago, when the preacher made an impassioned appeal for a school for the sons of the English clergy. He nearly broke down as he told the congregation that there were actually clergymen amongst his acquaintance who were thankful to accept parcels of second-hand clothing for the use of their children. Most of the congregation appeared entirely unmoved by this piteous statement. And as I walked home, I wondered why a different standard of morality seemed expected from the laity than from the clergy.

There was a paper in the pew I occupied stating what the various incomes of the clergy are. I saw that £67 a year appeared to be the lowest stipend for a beneficed clergyman, and that there were 4704 whose income is under £155, and 7,000 curates whose incomes do not average £130 per year.

I think I am correct in stating that a subaltern in a line regiment receives £95 16*s*. 3*d*. yearly. Out of this he is asked to pay a good many subscriptions, and to dress in a way that is not expected of any curate—not to speak of the cost of his uniform. It is almost obligatory for him to go a good deal into society, with all the expense that entails.

Sixty-seven pounds a year is no doubt a very small income. Still, it is a living wage, and it is possible in the country to be fairly comfortable on this sum, given a house

and garden rent free. A curé in France is only guaranteed £36 a year and a house.

Ah! but the clergyman would say, "What about marriage?" That is the crux of the whole matter. The clergy consider that they have a right to marry at the country's expense. They consider, in fact, that a less measure of self-control is expected from them than from the other members of the nation.

What happens if a penniless subaltern in a good regiment marries? He leaves. What happens if a briefless barrister marries? He starves. What happens if clerks, actors, business men, doctors, or men in any other profession marry on an insufficient income? Is there a public appeal to the compassionate for money on their behalf? Do colonels stand up and tell us that they know majors who would be pleased with parcels of second-hand clothing? We know that they do not. And we know that the good sense and right feeling of the community strongly condemns the man who marries and brings children into the world without being able to provide for their present, and insure their future welfare. In no classes except those of the entirely uneducated, and of the clergy, does reckless improvidence fail to invoke censure from a man's social equals. We all admit how tragic it is that the march of civilization should prevent early marriages. But so it is, and the conditions that press hard on the clergyman press equally hard on the lawyer, the soldier, the diplomat—and hardest, perhaps, on the country doctor, who most of all these men needs a home. Only in one profession is there a distinct feeling that others should be responsible for supporting the offspring of a particular class. Why?

The answer of most clergymen would, I suppose, be that they work very hard for the common good. It is true that a small proportion do probably work harder than any other individuals of the nation, and for no advantage but a bare living wage. All honour to them! They have their reward in the utter devotion of their parishioners. But it is a curious fact that these men are nearly invariably

celibate, and do not ask the congregation to support their families. The average clergyman works no harder than other men—and very much less hard than the doctor. There are many, especially country clergymen, or clergymen in fashionable watering places, who have a very easy time indeed. These are often the people who have such large families that they find it difficult to make both ends meet.

We hear a great deal about the indifference of the laity to the Church. It is perfectly true. A large proportion of the laity, though they regard the Church as a venerable institution, never think of it as an important factor in their lives. Most men are a little distressed if their son wishes to be a clergyman. And it would be as unfair as it would be untrue to say that it is from any fear of the privations he would have to undergo. Englishmen send their sons very nobly and unselfishly into posts of danger and hardship —witness the long list of gallant names of those who have lived and died in India. No, what these fathers feel is that the clergyman becomes on the whole a different kind of man from the man they wish their sons to be. Many people must have seen the faithful, if slightly brutal sketch of a certain type of fashionable clergyman given by Mr. Albert Chevalier at the Coliseum during September 1911. One wonders if a caricature of the established religious teacher of their country would be received by any other nation in the world with such shouts of applause, save, perhaps, by Americans. The huge audience was not composed of rough or unmannerly people; it was a representative gathering of respectable citizens from every section of the community. I remembered as I watched it that a gifted Frenchman, who had lived years in England, once said to me, "Why, whenever an Englishman mentions the word 'parson' is it with a slight nuance of contempt? We often hate priests in my country, but we do not despise them." The Coliseum sketch is not an isolated example. A very cursory glance at the place occupied by the English clergyman in fiction, on the stage, and in the comic papers,

will prove that my French friend's criticism was not ill-founded.

The reason is not far to seek. The Roman priest, whatever his social position, has given up a great deal for his profession. He has practically renounced all that which to most men makes life worth living. The laity, whatever their religious opinions may be, recognize this, and in fairness pay a certain respect to the man who has done what they know they are not capable of. A certain aloofness —a certain loneliness—comes at once into the life of the man who has entered the priesthood. He dwells on the mountain peaks, and ordinary humanity in the vale. It is because of this aloofness that he becomes not only the teacher but the friend of humanity in all its great moments of stress. He who walks alone with God can help the soul that has suffered, the soul that has sinned, and the soul that is going alone into the great darkness. The ordinary English clergyman knows by bitter experience how seldom he is sent for by his parishioners when they are in trouble. Many devoted men chafe under this knowledge: they long to help, and cannot. *They have not given up enough.* For, because of all he has renounced, full measure of recompense is given the priest—the wonderful communion with his Master, the power to remit sins, the power to confer the Grace of God, the actual God Incarnate called into being by his hands. He stands—solitary indeed—but never alone, because with him is God Almighty, Very God of Very God.

I shall never forget once hearing a boy priest say his first Mass in the Church of the small village where he was born. The building was crammed with women in their gay kerchiefs, and men who had known him a curly-headed urchin at his mother's door. A procession of little girls carrying white lilies led the boy, crowned with green leaves, to the altar. The sermon, preached by a youth but a few years older, a school companion of the neophyte, was strangely eloquent. He said: "To-day many of you are thinking of what he gives up: Love, children, all the

links that bind men to each other. And you say 'What a sacrifice!' But what does he gain? Is it not enough to be the disciple of Christ, to be one of those who have power given direct from the Lord to raise the fallen, heal the bruised soul, and give the very Body of God to those who ask? What have any of you got that compares with these things? My brethren, there was once a man who found a pearl of great price. You know how he sold all for that pearl. Behold one more who has found it."

Then the other—white as death—began to say Mass. And suddenly after the consecration his faltering voice grew firm, and as he turned with the Host, a radiance not of this world came into his face. It was no boy who dismissed us with the great words *Ite, missa est*. It was one who came down from the mountain top with the glory still upon his hair.

"Ah!" will say any Roman Catholics who read this paper, "you plainly admit that we have the real thing, and that your so-called 'Anglican Church' is but a poor maimed copy of the Roman." This I emphatically deny. I believe as strongly as I am capable of believing anything, that our Anglican Church has an historic continuity and is truly a part of the one and only Catholic Church. That we have sinned deeply, have for centuries rejected our high tradition, have bartered our birthright for a mess of pottage, I admit, as do all fair-minded Churchmen, in dust and ashes. But that our Church regrets her faults is also true, and this penitence is a greater sign of Divine Guidance than arrogance would be. If anything could increase the love and loyalty and faith in our Church which we already possess, it is the humble confession that *Churches* are, after all, but fallible, and only in their realization that God alone *is* infallible can we ever hope to attain to some approximate image of what the perfected Church will be.

But to return to the subject in hand. There are signs in the air that in England the need for priests, as opposed to clergymen, is more general than is popularly supposed. I

think the Church has come to the parting of the ways. The parson of the end of the eighteenth century, specimens of whom survived down to our own day—who hunted and shot, and was a pleasant man of the world and a first-rate whist player—is extinct. He was possibly a delightful person, but he was no more a priest than is the Prime Minister. His successor, whom Trollope has portrayed for us amongst his many types—the mild, inoffensive, slightly grotesque clergyman we all know—is also passing. We are trying to take our priest seriously. The Oxford Movement, for so long only the leaven of the small minority, is beginning to work in the mass of the Church. And the demand for spiritual leaders and teachers is upon us. It is being met, and very nobly, by the few. The enormous strain put upon them, their great personal influence, tell their own tale. Are the bulk of the English clergy going to answer the call, or are they not? It lies in their hands to prevent "the indifference of the laity to the Church." Below the apparent indifference there is a very hunger for help.

I remember a tragic case of the inadequacy of the "clergyman" in a Midland village where I once lived. An old labourer dying in tortures from cancer of the tongue, and in great depression of soul, was advised by a well-meaning lady to send for his parish priest. I asked next time I went to see him whether the clergyman had helped him. With a whimsical, sad little smile, he replied, "Well, ma'am, he talked to me about his son in India." Several Anglicans, seeing the trouble he was in, told him to ask Father ——, the Roman priest of the place, to visit him. I was struck at our next interview by the utter peace of that old man's face. He was received into the Roman Church directly, and died blessing the illness that had helped him to find reality. That man could have found equal help and comfort in our Church had the village possessed a "priest" and not a "clergyman." Is it possible to convince the rank and file of the English Church of our requirements, or is the seed so nobly sown by Keble and

Newman and Pusey, and now only bearing fruit after long years, to be garnered on the one hand by the Roman Church, and on the other by "Christian Science" teachers, and the many other vague associations who believe in a more or less inspired carpenter? If the demand is to be met, it must be by the realization, once and for all, that the man who wishes to become a priest should become one indeed, should recognize that if he is to do all that the priest claims to do he cannot be as other men, bound by the ties of home and kindred, and wife and child. He must obey the solemn command of his Master: "So likewise whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Salt is good, but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewithal shall it be seasoned?" Luke xiv. 26-34.

The enemies of celibacy would, I suppose, bring forward three cardinal objections to prove their point.

The first of these would be that grave scandals will arise should the clergy not be allowed to marry. I do not believe it. It is an insult to our clergy to say that they are only decent men because they are married. Both the Roman and the Anglican Church in this country are singularly free from scandals. There are bad cases now and then. We perhaps hear more about them amongst our people, because discipline is weaker, but to the credit of both communions be it said, there are wonderfully few such instances, and the fact that marriage is permitted among us does not prevent ugly lapses now and then, as we know from the daily papers.

The second argument against the celibacy of the clergy is not a difficult one to meet. "Marriage makes them so much more capable of understanding human needs." Does it? Do people ever prefer a married doctor, or a married lawyer, or a married tutor because they think that the fact of his having a wife will make him understand their needs better? Then why prefer a married clergyman? And do not any of us who know priests in both Churches know how much more frequently one meets human "Roman"

priests than human "Anglican" clergyman? And are not the human types one does meet almost invariably unmarried men?

The third objection is that the wife and family of the clergyman do such good work in the parish. That there are many splendid women who are wives of clergymen and daughters of clergymen, I do not for an instant deny. But that there are many wives and daughters of clergymen who are a byword in their parishes for silliness and scandal-mongering is also true. Mrs. Proudie is not yet dead. And where they are not as bad as that, how little they matter in many cases, either way! The fine women in the community, be they wives of clergymen or simple lay folk, will always be a help or comfort in the parish. As for the others, it would be a relief to their immediate surroundings if they were eliminated, and so ceased to bring the Church into contempt. I would quote, in this connection, two letters that appeared in the "Church Times" of the 10th of February 1911.

One, signed "A Vicarage Lady," complains bitterly that the laity wish the wives of the clergy to be "dowdy." One smiles at the hopeless incongruity of the wife of a priest setting up as a leader of fashion. It would be funny if it were not tragic.

The second letter, from a layman, signed "Cherchez la femme" states:

> It is also my misfortune, and that of a vast number of country churchmen, to know from personal experience what an exceedingly bad influence can be exercised by "the Vicarage Lady"—an assertion which many laymen will bear out. I use the term in the vulgar tongue. I am quite alive to the fact that the wife of a country parson occupies a position of great difficulty. But it is not made easier by the deplorable want of judgment usually displayed by these good men in the choice of wives.

Both letters speak for themselves.

We come now to a graver aspect of the matter. No sane person can have any objections to a Protestant minister, of whatever denomination, marrying. He does not believe

in the Sacraments—that is, he does not believe in any supernatural power as residing in the Sacraments. He does not believe in the Apostolic Succession. He is at best a moral and ethical adviser to his flock. The Anglican Church, on the other hand, preaches the Real Presence, the necessity for Confession, the regenerating power of Baptism. Let us take only one of these Sacraments—Confession. For Confession to be possible there must be a clear line of demarcation between confessor and confessed. Every man or woman of the world would pronounce it a dangerous and a false position for, let us say, a young and attractive woman to discuss the inmost secrets of her soul with a man, unless there were between them some absolute gulf which could not be bridged. It is nauseous to think of a girl relating her sins to a possible husband. Yet, without the safeguard of celibacy these things must occur. And because, as the conscience of the country awakens (which, thank God, it is doing every day), the inherent need of Confession to most, if not all, human souls becomes an acknowledged fact, so the need of the priest not trammelled by earthly ties will become more apparent. I do not say that a man cannot be an excellent person, a true friend and a public benefactor, as a married clergyman—there are many such. I only say that he can never be a priest, in the fullest sense of the word. He will never have that hold over his flock or that *direct* communication with God which a priest has.

"But," says the average Englishman, "I don't *want* a priest, it 's just what I dislike. I want a *clergyman*—a cut above me perhaps in morals, but a nice jolly fellow who preaches interesting sermons about the topics of the day, and gives plenty of ripping hymns and music in the service, and has beautiful flowers on the altar." By all means, my friend—but don't talk about belonging to the Catholic Church. There are plenty of other nice bodies to belong to that fulfil all your conditions.

There is no reason why there should not be an order of lay married "ministers" who read Matins, help in the

village cricket matches, go to parties, organize private theatricals and bazaars, and give out soup tickets. It is an excellent opening for people with a taste for philanthropy and organization. But they should not be allowed to celebrate the Sacraments. It is cheapening the Sacraments to allow anyone to administer them save those who—for so great a privilege—have renounced all. And the nation will never be won back to believe in the Sacraments till the Church again shows by the reverence with which it handles them, that the Sacraments exist.

"But," say my horrified readers, "we are a Christian country—we *all* accept the Sacraments." We are not a Christian country. To the great majority of us the Sacraments are a dead letter. If ever a country needed conversion it is England at this moment. And for the great fact of conversion to become true, the established order of things has to be swept away. "*Was fällt, das soll man auch niederreissen.*"

Another class of readers will exclaim: "Why hope to put flesh and blood on the dead bones of the English Church? Why not join the Roman Communion?" First, because I would repeat more insistently, that I believe that the Anglican part of the Catholic Church is a living and important one. That, in spite of its many faults and failings, its centuries of perversity and disobedience and cowardice, it is now trying to purge itself from its age-long faults. And, what is more, I believe that, in the end, reunion will come to Christendom through us; that if only we hold fast to the faith that is in us, in God's good time the wounds will heal, and we shall be one.

But where divisions exist, because one branch of the Church is manifestly in the wrong, it is for that branch to make the first effort, and acknowledge the error. And this question of the marriage of the clergy is fundamentally an error, made by vast numbers of people in perfectly good faith, but nevertheless an error. No one who has studied the history of the Reformation in England can have failed to realize how the marriage of the clergy slowly crept in,

fostered by men who wished to kill the spiritual life of the Church, and make of it an instrument for the use of the State. It was deliberately encouraged by those who hated the power of the priest, and knew that the surest way to undermine it was to weaken the priest's hold on the laity by making his standard a lower one. No one, I say, who has studied these things with an open mind can deny that the loosening of the tie of celibacy went sorely against the grain of all that was best and noblest in the Church. Even Elizabeth, who cannot be said to have been biassed towards Romanism, spoke her mind on the subject, somewhat crudely, perhaps, but with no uncertain voice.

Many of the clergy, and of the laity too, will say, "It is a great sacrifice, too great for us to make." Of course, it is a tremendous sacrifice, and one which should never be required of the very young. No man should be ordained before he is twenty-five. By that time he knows if he is fit for the priesthood. And even then, let him wait till thirty before he takes the final Orders. Let the Church contain a body of trained men who help with the philanthropic and social work. There is an endless amount to be done entirely apart from what, for want of a better term, I may call consecrated service. And for the former the training required should be thorough, and the salaries adequate. But do not let us any longer confuse such workers, much as we should respect and venerate them, with priests. That has been done for too long. Men's souls are crying out for salvation. They are seeking real shepherds.

Appendix

Clerical Celibacy and Ecumenical Law

The foregoing article has treated the subject of clerical celibacy mainly from the point of view of expediency, calculated with reference to social conditions and current popular ideas in present-day England. And the reader who has followed the gifted authoress's argument will probably agree that it would be difficult to show more cogently the extreme *desirability* of the virginal state for all who minister at the altar and in the tribunal of penance. But, in view of the ignorance which prevails on this matter, even in "ecclesiastical" circles, it seems well that a few remarks should be subjoined, dealing with the question from the standpoint of Catholic custom and Canon Law.

It is a curious fact that many Anglicans, who are loudest and most forward in claiming the name of "Catholic," seem to be utterly unaware of the fact that the Catholic Church has laid down, by tacit and universal agreement, a rule governing the marital relations of the clergy—a rule which stands on exactly the same footing, and possesses the same binding force upon conscience (for those affected by it) as the law prescribing the observance of the fast before Communion. We may formulate this rule as follows:—

No-one who has received Holy Orders may contract marriage after ordination.

This proposition represents the common factor underlying the legislation of East and West alike on the point. It is to be observed that the rule, as we have stated it, forbids an ordained man to marry: but it does not necessarily

forbid a man who is already married to be ordained. This is by no means a distinction without a difference, as we shall see. It is of course well known that in the churches of the Roman rite proper, only celibates may be ordained: but in the Oriental churches, both Uniate and Orthodox, candidates for the secular priesthood are nearly always *already* married, before ordination to the sub-diaconate. Both in East and West the reception of the sub-diaconate is the crucial step; in whatsoever state it finds the aspirant to the priesthood, in that he must abide, whether it be marriage or virginity.

The Eastern Church is often appealed to by those who wish to defend the marriage of the clergy; but the point is that the Eastern Church knows nothing of marriage *after* ordination, which, indeed, it regards with the greatest horror.[1] In other words, all Eastern priests are *either* celibates *or* married before ordination: the Orthodox Church knows nothing of the "bachelor" priest (*i.e.*, one who is not actually married but may be at any moment). And, as the Western Church requires celibacy from all her priests, it is clear that Catholic consent, the agreement of Rome and Moscow, of East and West, is absolutely unmistakeable in declaring that Ordination is a bar (or "diriment impediment") to any *subsequent* contraction of matrimony.

It is of interest to observe that whilst, both in the Uniate and Orthodox Eastern churches, priests who were married before ordination are allowed to retain and cohabit with their wives, the same Catholic consent to which we appealed above has, ever since the sixth century, decreed that *bishops* shall in any case be celibates: and, for this reason, Eastern

[1] The law of the Eastern Church on this point finds its classical expression in the 6th Canon of the Quini-Sextine Council (commonly known as that "in Trullo"), which punishes the cleric who contracts marriage after ordination with deposition from Holy Orders, or "unfrocking." We quote the relevant parts of the Canon; . . . *ὁρίζομεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηδαμῶς ὑποδιάκονον ἢ διάκονον ἢ πρεσβύτερον, μετὰ τὴν ἐπ' αὐτῷ χειροτονίαν, ἔχειν ἄδειαν γαμικὸν ἑαυτῷ συνιστᾶν συνοικέσιον. Εἰ δὲ τοῦτο τολμήσοι ποιῆσαι, καθαιρείσθω.* It is unnecessary to give quotations for the practice of the Latin Church.

bishops are practically always chosen from the "Black" or Regular Clergy.

It is not difficult to discern the principle underlying the Ecumenical rule of "No marriage *after* ordination." It is to ensure that all pastors of souls shall be *either* married *or* celibate, and consequently in either case beyond the reach of certain distractions and complications which might appear (and, as things are in England, do very frequently appear) in their ministerial intercourse with members of the other sex. If this rule were strictly observed, the priest's relations with the female members of his flock would of necessity be purely spiritual, untainted by the intrusion of any more earthly sentiment. There are few matters in which the Divinely-aided wisdom of the Universal Church, in laying down a particular rule, has been more conspicuously vindicated by the chaos which has ensued upon the rule's neglect.

The mind of the Church is quite unmistakeable, and the fact that Ecumenical law is as we have stated it, has never been, and cannot be, denied; we can, therefore, only attribute it to ignorance of Catholic law (or to deficiency in the sense of humour) when Church newspapers print sentimental accounts of a clergyman's wedding, sometimes observing, with evident complacency, that "a Nuptial Mass followed"!—as though the whole function were not in itself an intrinsically un-Catholic business which no amount of ceremonial gilding can disguise, a far grosser violation of the Common Law of the Church than any Evening Communion! Nor can the English Church's recovery of practical Catholicity ever be considered complete, so long as encyclicals are issued to "Mothers" and "Girls" by bishops' wives—functionaries, who (whatever their private virtues and charms) have been officially forbidden to exist by the Universal Church of the last fourteen centuries; to whom the voice of Catholic authority has said in no faltering accents *Non licet esse vos*. For Catholics, indeed, it should be enough to say that the *present* rule of the Church is thus and thus; but it may

add to our sense of the rule's sanctity and majesty if we remember that it has been the law of the Catholic Church from the earliest times, and, not improbably, represents a tradition descended directly from the Apostles themselves. Most of the earliest Christian ministers, as we read of them in the New Testament, were doubtless married: but there is not a shred of evidence to show that an unmarried apostle, prophet, or presbyter, was allowed to take to himself a wife *after* entering upon his office; and the existence and wide diffusion of the tradition against post-ordination marriage would suggest that he was not. The whole subject has been exhaustively dealt with by the Rev. C. Knetes, in two articles on "Ordination and Matrimony in the Eastern Orthodox Church," which appeared in the "Journal of Theological Studies" for April and July, 1910, and constitute a veritable mine of patristic learning, to which we must refer those who desire detailed proof of the statements formulated above.

Church law, then, requires "No marriage after ordination": Mrs. Huth Jackson, in her article, goes a step further, and suggests "No marriage at all." We must admit that, from the point of view of Ecumenical custom, the latter ideal, so powerfully advocated by Mrs. Jackson, is a counsel of perfection, rather than a positive obligation, for the two lower orders of the ministry. But that need not prevent us from asking the young, the ardent, and the generous, who are looking forward to the priesthood, to the work for souls and the life of intimate union with the Sacred Heart of our Divine Lord which it involves—"Can you be content with the second-best? Will you sacrifice the hidden sweetness of the daily Mass for the earthly joys of family and home? Will you not gird up the loins of your mind, nerve yourself to say 'The Lord is my portion, and the lot of my inheritance,' and endure the loneliness of the priestly life, borne up by the hope of the aureole of chastity in heaven, and the eternal reward promised to those who leave 'father and mother, houses and lands, *wives and children*,' for Christ's sake and the Gospel's?" If the

question is fairly and frankly put by his superiors before the pious seminarist, there can be no doubt as to what the reply will be.

"But what," it may be asked, "do you make of Article XXXII, 'Of the Marriage of Priests'? How do you reconcile the principles just expounded with the assent to this Article which English clergymen have to give before Ordination or admission to a benefice?" Let us examine the actual statements to which we are committed. The Article asserts

(i) That "Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, are not commanded by God's Law, either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage."

This is of course perfectly true, and is admitted by every one; the prohibition of post-ordination marriage, like the prohibition of food before Communion, is a matter of ecclesiastical Law, not of Divine institution.

It then goes on to state that it is therefore "lawful for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better unto godliness."

This statement *might* be construed, (and very probably was construed by the protestantizing party in the sixteenth century), as follows:—

"Seeing that there is no Divine command on the point, *and seeing that the Church of England repudiates the whole idea of Ecumenical law*, it follows that clergymen are, in the nature of things, at liberty to marry as much and as often as they please."

But such an interpretation would be clearly inconsistent with the whole mind of our formularies, which disclaim in the most emphatic manner any intention of "striking at laudable customs of the whole Catholic Church of Christ." We must therefore take the second half of the Article, not as *denying the existence of* the Ecumenical Law (which would be crass ignorance) nor as impugning its validity (which would be implicit heresy) but as *dispensing from its observance* within the provinces of Canterbury and York. It is

universally admitted that Ecclesiastical laws may be dispensed from, in contradistinction to Divine laws, which are *ex hypothesi* indispensable. Therefore, when the Article says "it is lawful for priests to marry . . ." we must take this as meaning "We, the bishops of England, *do hereby make it lawful* for English priests to marry, and do hereby dispense them (and ourselves) from the strict observance of Catholic discipline in the matter." Any other interpretation would seem of necessity to fasten the guilt of schism on the Church of England.

Inasmuch as the rule in question is one of ecclesiastical authority only, it would seem that the English Bishops of 1570 were not acting *ultra vires*, though they may have been acting in a lamentably injudicious manner, when they set up the standing dispensation contained in Article XXXII. It follows that a cleric of the English Rite who avails himself of the dispensation, and contracts marriage after ordination, cannot be said to commit a *sin*; he is very much in the position of one who has availed himself of a dispensation to marry his deceased wife's sister. We can, in fact, get a clear idea of the canonical aspect of the matter if we remember that the rule forbidding food before Communion, the rule forbidding marriage with a deceased wife's sister, and the rule forbidding marriage after ordination, all stand on the same level; they are all of ecclesiastical, not of Divine institution, and all may therefore be dispensed from by the proper authority. The individual, therefore, who avails himself of dispensations in these matters, does not do what is *intrinsically sinful*, though it may very often be the case that he is choosing the easier and less perfect course in preference to the higher, and *pro tanto* diminishing his own spiritual vitality. But a state of things in which these canons, laid down by authority of the Church, are permanently suspended for insufficient reason, or for no reason at all—in which dispensation from the Law is the rule, and its observance the exception—constitutes a practical stultification of the whole idea of ecclesiastical authority.

Clerical Celibacy and Ecumenical Law

The object of this note has been to state as simply as possible what Ecumenical law demands. And no-one who has realized the imposing unanimity of Catholic tradition in the matter can fail to see that the restoration of "primitive discipline," in this as in other departments of Church life, is "much to be wished." But it is also permissible to suggest further (as Mrs. Jackson does) that, given the social conditions and the general mental outlook of Western nations, the best way of maintaining the primitive discipline of "No marriage after ordination" is to supplement it by the Hildebrandine discipline of "No clerical marriage at all"—a policy which we may claim as traditionally "English," from its association with the names of St. Dunstan, who enforced it with vigour, and of Queen Elizabeth, whose attitude towards the wives of the clergy is well known.

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